WRITTEN ANSWERS TO STARRED QUESTIONS

Menace of touts at Airports

*364. SHRIMATI VIPLOVE THAKUR: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the general complaint of the foreign tourists being cheated by touts operating at various airports in the country particularly at Bhuntar Airport, Himachal Pradesh;

(b) if so, whether they are reportedly acting in connivance with the taxi operators, trolley retrieving staff and other subordinate staff;

(c) if so, whether any enquiry has been initiated in this matter;

(d) if so, the results thereof; and

(e) the follow-up action taken or proposed to be taken by Government thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) Yes, Sir. There had been few instances of general complaint by the foreign tourists being cheated by touts operating at airports. However, no such complaint has been received/recorded at Bhuntar Airport, Himachal Pradesh.

(b) Such instances do take place in connivance with taxi operators or trolley retrieving staff.

(c) and (d) Such incidents take place on the land side of passenger terminals and local Police who are responsible for maintaining law and order, do enquire into such incidents and take necessary action in the matter.

(e) Such cases are discussed in monthly Airport Security Committee and Airport Facilitation Committee Meetings for their elimination/mitigation.

Duty Terminal Manager undertakes frequent inspections on the land side of passenger terminals and whenever possible alongwith CISF personnel and apprehend tout(s). Apprehended tout(s) is/are handed over to the Local Police for further action.

In addition, following measures are adopted to reduce the menace of touts at airports:

1. Increase in surveillance and foot patrolling in the tout prone areas.

2. Increase in surveillance through CCTV.

3. Increase in fine amount.

4. Educating passenger against falling prey to such touts.

5. Checking of movement of unauthorized taxies by Traffic Police.

Assistance to AP under Accelerated Irrigation Benefit Programme

*365. SHRI SAYED AZEEZ PASHA: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Andhra Pradesh State Government have asked the Centre to enhance the allocation of Rs.8000 crore per year under the Accelerated Irrigation Benefit Programme in the next five years; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF WATER RESOURCES (PROF. SAIF-UD-DIN SOZ): (a) and (b) Central Assistance (CA) under the Accelerated Irrigation Benefits Programme (AIBP) is provided for irrigation projects on year to year basis keeping in view the ceiling fixed by the Planning Commission for the state as a whole and the budget provisions made by the state Government in the State budget during that particular year for the projects posed for CA under the Programme. The States are required to submit proposal (for new and for ongoing projects under AIBP) for CA on year to year basis.

Variations in rates of VAT between States

*366. SHRIMATI N.P. DURGA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that some variations in rates of VAT between State-to-State still exist due to some of the decisions taken by the Empowered Committee;

(b) if so, the details of decisions because of which there is a variation in VAT rates in some of the States;

(c) whether it is also a fact that some of the States have deviated from the EC approved rate structure;

(d) if so, the details of States which have deviated from this; and

(e) what action the Ministry is taking or proposed to take to persuade the States to follow the EC approved VAT structure?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) and (b) The State VAT, being a tax on sale or purchase of goods within a State, is